

ABSTRACT

A method of requesting and issuing a certificate from certification authority for use by an initiating correspondent with a registration authority is provided. The initiating correspondent makes a request for a certificate to the registration authority, and the registration authority sends the request to a certificate authority, which issues the certificate to the registration authority. The certificate is stored at a location in a directory and this location is associated with a pointer such as uniform resource locator (URL) that is derived from information contained in the certificate request. The initiating correspondent computes the location using the same information and forwards it to other correspondents. The other correspondents can then locate the certificate to authenticate the public key of the initiating correspondent.